

GABRIELLE GIFFORDS

8TH DISTRICT, ARIZONA

WASHINGTON OFFICE:

502 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-2542

DISTRICT OFFICES:

TUCSON OFFICE
1661 NORTH SWAN, SUITE 112
TUCSON, AZ 85712
(520) 881-3588

COCHISE COUNTY OFFICE
77 CALLE PORTAL, SUITE B-160
SIERRA VISTA, AZ 85635
(520) 459-3115



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0308

March 30, 2010

COMMITTEES:

ARMED SERVICES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AIR AND
LAND FORCES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY READINESS

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY
AND ENVIRONMENT

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

President Barack H. Obama
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Janet Napolitano
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear President Obama and Secretary Napolitano:

Southern Arizonans are mourning the death of Robert Krentz, a pillar of the ranching community, who was shot and killed Saturday on his ranch northeast of Douglas, Arizona. This cold-blooded murder is a sober reminder that the safety of U.S. citizens on American soil is under attack.

I urge you to take bold and immediate action to protect our citizens by deploying the National Guard to our southern border and by taking other forceful steps in response to the senseless killing of Mr. Krentz.

The region I represent is the nation's largest and most porous sector of the U.S.-Mexico border. More drugs are seized and more illegal immigrants are apprehended in the Tucson sector of the Border Patrol than anywhere else in the country.

Every day our Border Patrol Agents risk their lives in carrying out their mission under some of the harshest working conditions in the nation. Residents of the area are increasingly fearful of the violence that has been brought to the border and into our country by the drug cartels. The murder of Robert Krentz has heightened those fears. The people I represent are angry and demand action. I join with them in their call for a robust response to the killing of Robert Krentz.

The first priority of our government is the security of its citizens. We must take all necessary steps to ensure that our citizens are safe in their homes and on their land and provide our Border Patrol agents with the critical resources they need to keep our communities safe.

In addition to deploying the National Guard to the border, I am requesting that you take the following action:

1. We need to show our citizens that we will deliver the level of protection that is required. I ask you to act now to deploy more Border Patrol Agents to the border. This larger Border Patrol presence should include an increase in the number of horseback units which can more easily navigate the rough terrain of the border area.

2. The rural ranch land between Douglas, Arizona and the New Mexico State Line has become a major route for drug smuggling and we need to have a continuous Border Patrol presence in the area to combat this increased traffic. This requires that the Border Patrol establish a second forward operating base in the San Bernardino Valley and as close to the border as possible. It is imperative to the safety of our Border Patrol Agents as well as our citizens living and working near the U.S.-Mexico border that we stand this base up immediately.
3. The efforts to locate Mr. Krentz when he was reported missing showed us once again that law enforcement agencies still do not have the ability to communicate effectively and efficiently. This is a problem that I have brought to the attention of the Department of Homeland Security in the past but it is still unresolved. I ask you to take this on as a matter of urgency. It may be that working with the local cellular phone provider the range of coverage in this area can be expanded by adding to current cell phone tower systems. This problem cannot be allowed to continue.
4. Mobile Surveillance Systems have proven to be a highly effective asset for the Border Patrol. Reports from ranchers and Border Patrol Agents indicate that, where these units have been set up, the smuggling traffic dramatically decreases and apprehensions increase. I request that several Mobile Surveillance System units be deployed to the area that is currently under siege by smugglers.
5. There are many law enforcement agencies in the area who are working hard to stop the smugglers and protect our citizens. What is missing is a coordinated effort at the local level. I strongly recommend that you establish a Joint Agency Task Force that will unite the efforts of law enforcement personnel on the ground. We have the ability now to coordinate intelligence gathering and dissemination at the new Intelligence and Operations Coordination Center in Tucson. What is still needed is a coordinated multi-agency response on the border where the smugglers enter our country.

In addition to the requests I have sent to you in this letter, there may be more proposals from citizens who are on the front lines of this crisis. Tomorrow night I am meeting with area ranchers at the Apache School in Cochise County to hear their concerns and recommendations about what actions should be considered in the wake of the tragic death of Robert Krentz. I will send you a further communication following that meeting.

Unfortunately we were unable to apprehend the person who killed Mr. Krentz before he crossed the border into Mexico. Mexican officials must continue the search for the assailant. I ask that you secure their full cooperation and assistance in capturing this individual and extraditing him to the United States to face justice.

Thank you for your leadership and prompt response to my requests for action.

Sincerely Yours,



Gabrielle Giffords
Member of Congress